

Description

CLIPBOARD

BACKGROUND OF INVENTION

[0001] This invention relates to clipboards having a writing board with a spring clip for holding papers and the like, and, more particularly, to a clipboard having a simplified construction using a one-piece clip.

[0002] It is, of course, well known that clipboards are extremely useful in a variety of business, industrial and institutional applications in which a portable writing board is desired. Conventional clipboards have a metal clip formed of two main parts: a lower part riveted to a board and hingedly connected to an upper part, with a spring urging the upper part into contact with the board to hold papers. The upper part is connected to the lower part at a hinge location, the hinge location being between a wide, paper-holding edge and a tab for opening the clip against the urging of the spring.

SUMMARY OF INVENTION

[0003] A clipboard has a clip with upper and lower parts joined by a hinge. The lower part includes a locking wall and spaced-apart hold-down edges. The board has at least one upstanding lock element engaged with the locking wall on the lower part of the clip. The board includes grips engaged with the hold-down edges of the lower part of the clip.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DRAWINGS

[0004] A more complete understanding of the invention and its advantages will be apparent from the *Detailed Description* taken in conjunction with the accompanying Drawings, in which:

[0005] *FIGURE 1* is a perspective view of the clipboard of the present invention.

[0006] *FIGURE 2* is a perspective view of the clip mounted to the board.

[0007] *FIGURE 3* is a side view of the clip mounted to the board.

[0008] *FIGURE 4* is a bottom view of the clip mounted to the board.

[0009] *FIGURE 5* is an exploded view of the clip and board.

[0010] *FIGURE 6* is a sectional view taken along lines 6-6 of *FIGURE 4*.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

- [0011] Referring to *FIGURES 1–6*, where like numerals indicate like and corresponding elements, clipboard 10 includes a clip 12 and a board 14. Clip 12 has an upper part 16 and a lower part 18 integrally formed of thermoplastic and joined by a relatively–thin, living hinge 20.
- [0012] A spring 22 formed of metal bent into a U–shape has an upper edge 24 engaged with the upper part 16 of the clip 12 and a lower edge 26 engaged with the lower part 18 of the clip 12. Spring retainers 28, 30 are molded into the clip upper and lower parts 16, 18, respectively, and engaged with the spring upper and lower edges 24, 26, respectively.
- [0013] A key feature of the invention is the manner in which the clip is fastened to the board. Lower part 18 includes a locking wall 32 and spaced–apart hold–down edges 34,36. The board 14 has permanently–attached grips 38,40 engaged with the hold–down edges 34,36 of the lower part 18 of the clip 12. Grips 38,40 may be molded into the board 14, if it is molded thermoplastic, or could be riveted to a conventional hard fiber board.
- [0014] Grips 38,40 and hold–down edges 34,36 are parallel and dimensioned to close tolerances, such that the clip 12 is

restrained for linear, tightly-contacting, sliding motion with respect to board 14 when the grips 38,40 are engaged with the hold-down edges 34,36.

[0015] Board 14 has at least one, and preferably two, upstanding lock elements 42,44 engaged with the locking wall 32. Lock elements 42,44 are flexible and adapted and arranged to be moved into engagement with the locking wall 32 upon sliding motion of the clip 12 with respect to the board 14 as described above. Lock elements 42,44 are "upstanding" in the sense that upper portions of them stand above the plane of board 14 in their normal, unloaded state, as shown in *FIGURE 5*. Lock elements 42,44 are generally planar elements having planar top surfaces at a relatively slight angle with respect to the plane of board 14, as shown in *FIGURE 6*.

[0016] The locking wall 32 has a bottom surface 46 and a back surface 48. Bottom surface 46 of the locking wall 32 is adapted and arranged to depress the lock elements 42,44 upon sliding motion of the clip 12 with respect to the board 14, until the bottom surface 46 of the locking wall 32 clears the lock elements 42,44, whereupon the lock elements 42,44 stand back up to engage the back surface 48 of the locking wall 32 as shown in *FIGURE 6*.

[0017] In operation, the clipboard of the present invention is easily manufactured, having only three parts in the preferred embodiment: the clip 12, the board 14, and the spring 22. The spring 22 easily snaps into place in clip 12. Clip 12 and board 14 are molded from thermoplastic, with the grips, hold-down edges and locking features all molded into the pieces. They are then easily assembled together in one quick sliding motion, using the combination of grips, hold-down edges, locking wall and lock elements. Assembly thus is not only quick but requires no tools. The assembly is essentially irreversible, although with sufficient determination the lock elements can be disengaged by slipping a thin object like a knife under the clip.

[0018] It will be understood that each of the elements described above, or two or more together, may also find a useful application in other types of constructions differing from the type described above.

[0019] While the invention has been illustrated and described as embodied in a preferred clipboard, it is not intended to be limited to the details shown, since it will be understood that various omissions, modifications, substitutions and changes in the forms and details of the device illustrated and in its operation can be made by those skilled in the

art without departing in any way from the spirit of the present invention.

[0020] Without further analysis, the foregoing will so fully reveal the gist of the present invention that others can, by applying current knowledge, readily adapt it for various applications without omitting features that, from the standpoint of prior art, fairly constitute essential characteristics of the generic or specific aspects of this invention.

[0021] Whereas, the present invention has been described with respect to a specific embodiment thereof, it will be understood that various changes and modifications will be suggested to one skilled in the art and it is intended to encompass such changes and modifications as fall within the scope of the appended claims.

[0022] What is claimed as new and desired to be protected by Letters Patent is set forth in the appended claims.